IN THE CLAIMS

For the convenience of the Examiner, all claims have been presented whether or not an amendment has been made.

1. (Currently amended) A method for facilitating creation of a definition for automated data processing, comprising the steps of:

providing a set of predetermined function definitions which are different, at least one of said predetermined function definitions defining a function for manipulating image data; and

preparing a project definition expressed in a public communication protocol, said project definition defining a project for manipulating said image data according to said one predetermined function definition and including:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding definitions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ports.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, including the step of selecting as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein one of said function definitions implements a function which varies in dependence on control input; and wherein said preparing step includes the step of including in said project definition, for each said function portion therein that corresponds to said one of said function definitions, respective control information for use as said control input.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 3, wherein said preparing step includes the step of including in said project definition a list which identifies at least some of said function, source and destination portions, said project definition including for each said portion in said list a section which sets forth any said control information for that portion, and a section which includes said binding definitions for that portion.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, wherein said preparing step includes the step of including in said project definition a plurality of process definitions which each include a respective said list, said lists each including a subset of said function, source and destination portions, and said subsets being mutually exclusive.

6. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which recognizes a set of predetermined function definitions that are different, and which is operable when executed to facilitate preparation in a public communication protocol of a project definition for automated data processing which includes:

a plurality of function portions which each correspond to one of said function definitions in said set, and which each define at least one input port and at least one output port that are functionally related according to the corresponding function definition;

a further portion which includes a source portion identifying a data source and defining an output port through which data from the data source can be produced, and which includes a destination portion identifying a data destination and defining an input port through which data can be supplied to the data destination; and

binding information which includes binding definitions that each associate a respective said input port with one of said output ~~ports.~~ ports; and

wherein at least one of said predetermined function definitions defines a function for manipulating image data and said project definition defines a project for manipulating said image data according to said one predetermined function definition.

7. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 6, wherein said program is operable when executed to use as said public communication protocol the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) protocol.

8. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 6, wherein one of said function definitions implements a function which varies in dependence on control input; and wherein said program is operable when executed to include in said project definition, for each said function portion therein that corresponds to said one of said function definitions, respective control information for use as said control input.

9. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said program is operable when executed to include in said project definition a list which identifies at least some of said function, source and destination portions, said project definition including for each said portion in said list a section which sets forth any said control information for that portion, and a section which includes said binding definitions for that portion.

10. (Original) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 9, wherein said program is operable when executed to include in said project definition a plurality of process definitions which each include a respective said list, said lists each including a subset of said function, source and destination portions, and said subsets being mutually exclusive.

11. (New) A method according to Claim 3, wherein said function blurs an image and said control information selects between a plurality of blurring techniques.

12. (New) A method according to Claim 3, wherein said function expands an image and said control information selects between a plurality of colors to fill resulting added area.

13. (New) A method according to Claim 3, wherein said function performs at least one mathematical computation using said image data and said control information selects between a plurality of mathematical equations.

14. (New) A method according to Claim 3, wherein said function cooperates with a separate image processing application to perform an operation using said separate image processing application.

15. (New) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said function blurs an image and said control information selects between a plurality of blurring techniques.

16. (New) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said function expands an image and said control information selects between a plurality of colors to fill resulting added area.

17. (New) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said function performs at least one mathematical computation using said image data and said control information selects between a plurality of mathematical equations.

18. (New) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 8, wherein said function cooperates with a separate image processing application to perform an operation using said separate image processing application.